

HEALTH ISSUES AND THE ILLEGAL ALIEN

When I worked for the Department of Human Services, a local hospital called asking for help. An illegal immigrant had been in an automobile accident. He had a medical bill of over \$260,000 (which the hospital was unable to collect due to a lack of health or auto insurance) and the hospital could not discharge him due to his claim of being homeless. I cannot explain why the staff did not just call a cab and send him to a shelter, other than my belief that they were afraid of being sued. After talking to the illegal, he informed me he was collecting a welfare check from New Jersey. The DHS worker from New Jersey then informed me that this person was most likely receiving multiple welfare checks under different names from his state as well as other states. This is but one example of the costs associated with the estimated 10 million illegals living in this country. Hospitals all across the nation are facing losses due to similar circumstances.

In order to be accepted as a legal immigrant, you must pass a health inspection. The illegal alien does not receive this inspection and brings into the U.S. whatever diseases he or she may have. Since there are estimates ranging from 11 to 20 million illegal aliens in this country, one can see why everyone should be concerned with illegal immigration (*Alternatives to Amnesty* by Edwin Meese III. The Heritage Foundation)

In her article, *Illegal Aliens and American Medicine*, Dr. Madeleine Cosman outlines some of the diseases brought into the United States by illegals. These include:

Tuberculosis: One strain has a 60% fatality rate due to being drug resistant. The cost to combat this disease is usually around \$250,000. Each illegal is also believed to have infected between ten and thirty people. California, Virginia, and other states report dramatic increases in this disease. Forty-two percent of all new cases can be traced to immigrants.

Chagas Disease: This disease is a parasite that infects 18 million people per year. Chagas Disease is incurable and kills 50,000 people per year. It is now being seen in our blood supply.

Leprosy: This disease is also on the rise with 7000 new cases being reported.

Dengue Fever: This has been spread in Texas and has one strain that is deadly.

Polio, Malaria, Hepatitis A, B, and C are also increasing in numbers.

The cost of illegals not having insurance is devastating to all hospitals. A federal mandate orders hospitals to receive any person in the event of an emergency. One apparent problem is that the act fails to define "emergency". Another problem is the Federal government will not reimburse the hospitals. In California, people are coming by ambulance from Mexico for treatment in emergency rooms. The result for California is the closing of eighty-four hospitals.



In 2004 Tennessee hospitals lost over 1 billion dollars due to bad debt, charity cases, and TennCare problems.

Between 300,000 to 350,000 babies are born in the U.S. every year to illegals all free of charge. If these children have birth defects, they qualify for welfare as well. It is also estimated that 25% of the SSI recipients are either legal or illegal aliens.

According to a Center for Immigration Studies report entitled *Immigrants at Mid-Decade* by Steven Camarota, immigrants are using our welfare system at alarming rates.

- 26.9% of immigrant headed households are using *at least* one major welfare program
- 1/3 of all immigrants lack health insurance
- 65% of illegals lack health insurance compared to 13% of the native population
- Immigrants and their U.S. born children account for almost 3/4 (nine million people) of the increase in the uninsured population since 1989
- 36.5% of all immigrant households receive the Earned Income Tax Credit

I sold a mini van to a person who claimed he made \$12.00 an hour as a welder. Yet, this person was raising five children and could pay between \$400 and \$500 a month in automobile payments. How can he do it? No doubt he is on multiple government programs, TennCare most likely being one of them. I would also suppose that his family is receiving the Earned Income Tax Credit and it would not surprise me if he is not paying any income tax.

We must stop this abuse of our medical system before it bankrupts all of our hospitals as it is now doing in California. Social Security was never intended to fund all of these illegals and their families and will be bankrupted as a result. When you consider the costs to the public and the risk of epidemics, suddenly illegal aliens' labor is not that cheap.

For more information please go to these web sites: The Heritage Foundation, Pew Hispanic Center, Eagle Forum, Center for Immigration Studies and the U.S. Department of State.

